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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 003199

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/25/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [RS](#) [FR](#) [KCFE](#)  
SUBJECT: CFE: DAS KRAMER'S JULY 20 MTG WITH FRENCH OFFICIALS

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR JOSIAH ROSENBLATT  
FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: In a July 20 meeting with Jean-Hughes Simon-Michel, PDAS-equivalent for Strategic Affairs, DAS Kramer explained that Russian DFM Kislyak would be in the U.S. the last week of July to discuss missile defense and CFE issues. Though not optimistic, we hoped to obtain a better understanding of Russia's flexibility on CFE. Kramer insisted that any movement from the U.S. and Europe should only be made in concert with a Russian commitment to the process. Simon-Michel expressed French concerns about a possible Russian arms build-up and said the GOF was actively looking for a constructive way out of the current impasse. On the question of suspension vs. withdrawal, Simon-Michel said France hoped, despite legal niceties, that the suspension would not be referred to as withdrawal. END SUMMARY

#### ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SITUATION

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12. (C) In a July 20 meeting with Strategic Affairs PDAS-equivalent Jean-Hughes Simon-Michel, DAS Kramer noted that Russian DFM Kislyak would be in the U.S. the last week of July to discuss defense issues. The U.S., he explained, would not be looking to make a deal with the Russians, but would be interested in exploring Russia's willingness to be flexible on CFE. Russia's current rejection of the linkage with its Istanbul commitments, he said, was not promising. Kramer also stressed that it was too early to discuss the flank regime -- this should not be done prior to the Treaty's ratification. Reaffirmation by Slovenia and the Baltic states' of their intent to join the Treaty when it is in force, however, might be something that could be done in concert with a clear Russian move in the right direction. Kramer hoped to have a better understanding of the Russian position after Kislyak's visit to Washington.

#### WHO MOVES FIRST ?

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13. (C) Simon-Michel expressed strong concern about classical arms control in Europe and stressed the need to find a solution or a process before Russian suspension went into effect on December 12. He said that France was aware of Russian responsibilities, while arguing that, for face-saving reasons, we did not have to oblige them to make the first move. He suggested that the U.S. and Europeans give Russia a signal of willingness to engage and make concessions. Simon-Michel insisted the GOF was aware from the Kosovo experience that Russia might not be prepared to compromise, and he assured Kramer that France would not allow itself to be manipulated in the process. Kramer noted that flexibility by the Russians was critical if the U.S. and Europeans were to be flexible as well. A show of goodwill should occur in

concert with a public or private commitment by the Russians to engage constructively on implementation of the Istanbul commitments. Despite a French warning to Moscow that an arms build-up could work in both directions, Simon-Michel remained convinced that there was some reason to worry that Russia, in the absence of ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty, would make a move to build up arms on its southern and western borders.

#### U.S. FORCES IN EUROPE

14. (C) In response to probing by Simon-Michel, Kramer assured him that the U.S. had no intention of increasing significantly U.S. force levels in Europe -- not in Georgia, Romania or Bulgaria. Troop levels were consistent with the Treaty's obligations, and any anticipated increases would remain within the Treaty's limits. The U.S., he stated, had absolutely no interest in engaging in an arms race with Russia.

#### SUSPENSION OR WITHDRAWAL ?

15. (C) Without a provision in the current CFE Treaty for suspension, the U.S. had not yet determined how to deal with the Russian announcement. Legally speaking, it appeared as if suspension was equivalent to withdrawal, but U.S. lawyers had yet to come to any determinations, Kramer explained. Simon-Michel stated that France hoped to keep the rhetoric at suspension, despite the legal niceties of the issue.

16. (U) This cable has been cleared with DAS Kramer.

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